

The IDVA Update



Mitch Daniels - Governor
Tom Applegate - Director

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The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs Newsletter

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Wreaths Across America



The Indiana Veterans' Memorial Cemetery held a special service on December 12, 2009 to honor the Veterans and their families who are interred at the cemetery. A Christmas Wreath was placed on each monument and at the base of each service flag in honor of those who served and those who are serving in the Armed Services. A Christmas Wreath was placed at the base of the POW/MIA flag to remember and honor all service members whose last known status was either Prisoner of War or Missing in Action.

Veterans, families and friends gathered after the service and laid 480 wreaths to remember the fallen and honor those who served and are currently serving in the Armed Forces of our great nation. Honored as well were their families who endure sacrifices everyday on our behalf. Wreaths Across America also helps teach the children that the freedoms they enjoy today have come with a price.



A special thanks to Morgan & Nay Funeral Centre and American Legion Post 9 for their generous donation of the Christmas Wreaths. Thanks to the American Legion, Post 9 Honor Guard for rendering military honors during the service.



New Assistant State Veteran Service Officer Selected

IDVA Gets its First Marine - ooh-rah!



Ashley A. Roberts, has recently been selected as the new Assistant State Veteran Service Officer at Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs. Ashley came onboard on November 30, 2009. Prior to joining IDVA, she worked as a Local Veteran Employment Representative, (LVER) with the Department of Workforce Development.

She joined the United States Marine Corps on September 11, 2001 and got out in the Fall of 2003. Serving on Camp Lejeune, North Carolina as a Marine Combat Instructor and assisting A.I.T.C. on Camp Geiger. Ashley attended Vincennes University, Majoring in Criminal Justice and Psychology, and is currently furthering her Education to include Business Management and Political Science.

She is a member of the Marine Corps League, American Legion, the Navy Club and Disabled American Veterans.



VA Announces Plans to Open New Clinic in Evansville

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced plans to open a new clinic on the far-east side of Evansville to serve the growing population of veterans in that area. The new clinic will open Fall 2011 and will replace the downtown facility.

Construction on the new facility will begin summer 2010.

New State Vietnam Memorial Web Site

By Tom Applegate

The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs has recently put the finishing touches to a new Vietnam Memorial web site to honor those Hoosier veterans who gave their lives during the Vietnam War.

Veterans can still access the names on the wall by visiting their County Veterans' Service Officer's page on the Indiana Veterans' Service Officers' Association (INVSOA) web site at <http://invsoa.homestead.com> and clicking on the County Service Officers link and then on their respective county, but there is now a more direct link.

Go to <http://IndianaVietnamMemorial.homestead.com> and click on the county for direct access. The index page shows the name of the county with the number of casualties in parenthesis. It also lists the various abbreviations which are used on the pages. The date of the casualty reflects the date died or declared dead, not the date declared missing or captured.

VA Opens New Primary Care Clinic on Indy West Side

Good news for veterans, the VA has recently opened a new Primary Care Clinic on the west side of Indianapolis. The clinic officially opened in December to help ease the burden and to help diminish wait times for clinic appointments. The new clinic is located at 3850 Shore Drive, Suite 203, Indianapolis, IN 46254, 317-988-4498.

Features of the new clinic are:

- Plenty of surface parking available
- Newly renovated clinic space
- Elevator access to the 2nd floor clinic
- Full primary care services

X-rays, however must be done at the VA Medical Center on 10th Street and walk-ins cannot be accommodated. For a same day appointment please contact the clinic directly.

Tricare Program for 'Gray Area' Reservists Coming

FALLS CHURCH, Va.(AFRNS) -- A new program will offer "gray area" reservists the opportunity to purchase Tricare health care coverage.

While qualified members of the Selected Reserve may purchase premium-based coverage under Tricare Reserve Select, or TRS, retired National Guard and Reserve personnel did not have Tricare health coverage options until they reached age 60.

Under a provision of the National Defense Authorization Act for 2010, that has all changed.

The new provision allows certain members of the Retired Reserve who are not yet age 60, called "gray-area" retirees, to purchase Tricare Standard and Tricare Extra coverage. Tricare Extra simply means beneficiaries have lower out of pocket costs if they use a network provider.

"We're working hard to coordinate all the details of eligibility, coverage and costs, and expedite implementation of this important program," said Rear Adm. Christine Hunter, deputy director of the Tricare Management Activity. "This is a major benefit program with implementation on the same magnitude as TRS. It will require detailed design, development and testing, but qualified retired reservists should be able to purchase coverage by late summer or early fall of 2010."

While the health care benefit provided for gray-area retirees will be Tricare Standard and Extra – similar to TRS – the new program will differ from TRS in its qualifications, premiums, copayment rates and catastrophic cap requirements. The program is tentatively called Tricare Retired Reserve.

The new statute requires premium rates to equal the full cost of the coverage. That is the major difference contrasted with TRS, where the statute provides that Selected Reserve members pay only 28 percent of the cost of the coverage. Premiums for the new gray-area retiree program will be announced after program rules are published in the Federal Register.

This new program offers an important health coverage option for Reserve and National Guard members who served their country honorably before hanging up their uniforms at retirement, said Admiral Hunter.

For more information about Tricare benefits, visit go to www.tricare.mil. (Courtesy of Tricare)

Noble County Veterans' Service Officer Passes Away



Jimmy L. Erdly, 60, of rural Ligonier, died at 3:46 a.m. Sunday, January 03, 2010 at Parkview Main Hospital, Fort Wayne.

He was born January 21, 1949 at Luckey Hospital, Wolf Lake, Indiana a son of Evart F. and Pauline (Bair) Erdly. His formative years were spent in Wolf Lake. He graduated from Wolf Lake High School in 1967.

He attended Huntington College. On April 7, 1969 he was inducted in the U.S. Army. He served as an infantryman in Vietnam. He earned the rank of Sergeant and was released from active duty on April 6, 1971. He entered the Indiana National Guard. In December 1976, he was prompted to 2nd Lieutenant. During his tenure, he was the Infantry Company Commander twice and state area Commander for seven years. He served as the State Marksman Coordinator, Assistant State Inspector General, Battalion Logistics Officer and Assistant Brigade Logistics Officer. Among his many medals are 5 Bronze Stars, three of which were earned during his service in Vietnam. He retired in 1994 with the rank of Major. He had a combined service to the military of over 25 years.

On April 1, 1999, he was united in marriage to Norma J. Gray. They made their home in rural Ligonier.

(Continued on page 4)

Military Family Relief Fund

Perhaps you are or know of a service member or service member's family who is having financial difficulties. The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) may be able to assist.

Since 2007, IDVA has offered an emergency grant, the Military Family Relief Fund, to our active duty service members. The grant is available to families of deployed or recently deployed Indiana National Guard members, members of the Selected Reserves, and certain active duty service members. These funds may be used by the families to assist with such items as food, housing expenses, utilities, medical services, transportation, and other essential family expenses which have become difficult to afford. Qualified individuals or families can receive up to \$5,000 per year in grants. The year starts with the date the grant is approved.

Grants will be considered by the Military and Veterans' Benefits Board and the applicant will be advised. Incomplete packets/applications will not be considered by the Board.

Grant eligibility requirements are as follows:

- A resident of Indiana.
- Pending or current active duty orders and those that have returned from active duty within the last year.
- Thirty (30) consecutive days or more of Duty Status Title 10. Basic Training, AIT or recruiting duty is not considered deployment.
- Member is in good standing.

For additional information or to apply for the Military Family Relief Fund, please visit our website, www.in.gov/dva, or contact our Program Coordinator Noelle Wikert at (317)232-3922, toll free at 800-400-4520, or by e-mail nwikert@dva.in.gov.

He was the owner operator of the Kimmel Inn Tavern since 1988 and for the past four years he was the Veterans Service Officer for Noble County. His memberships included VFW Post 4717, past commander, Wolf Lake, American Legion Post 246, past commander, Albion, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, Ligonier and Masonic Lodge, Cromwell.

Surviving relatives include his wife, Norma; two brothers, Charles Erdly, Linton, IN and David (Sherry) Erdly of Albion; brother-in-law, Fred Colen, Albion; nephews, Anthony Erdly, Timothy Erdly, Todd Erdly, David Erdly; nieces, Anita Woodward, Lisa Purichia, Paulette Lannan, Kimberly Erdly, Katie Erdly; 5 great nieces, 5 great nephews and 5 great-great nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, a brother, William Erdly and sister, Kayanne Colen.

For those who wish, memorials may be made to American Lung Association or Vietnam Veterans of America.

VA Delays Medication Copayment Increase.

The [Navy Times](#) (1/5, Maze, 54K) reports, "A \$1 increase in copayments for outpatient medications for veterans who do not qualify for free prescriptions is being delayed for six months while the Veterans Affairs Department reviews its options."

The "current charge of \$8 was supposed to rise to \$9 on Jan. 1 under regulations that call for prescription drug charges to keep pace with prescription drug charges in the private sector. But on Dec. 31, VA officials announced in the Federal Register that they were delaying the increase until July 1 so they could reconsider how increases are calculated."

State Approving Agency Update/IDVA Newsletter

Did You Know?

Many veterans and active duty personnel can qualify for more than one educational benefit program.

- Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33)
- Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB, Chapter 30 and Chapter 1606)
- Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP, Chapter 1607)
- Post Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance program (VEAP, Chapter 32).

There is a relatively new feature on the VA web site www.gibill.va.gov that can be a useful tool for Veterans and other eligible persons who have educational entitlements. Under the "What Benefit is best for me" tab you will find a "step-by-step" process that can help guide you through the various educational options you have. Depending on your individual circumstances, one of these programs may offer you better benefits than the others.

While you are the only person who can choose which program meets your needs, VA has developed a process that may help you compare the different education programs and decide which is best for you. This process includes links to additional information on the VA website that may help you make your decision.

Another Important Consideration

If you are an active duty service member anticipating at least a 20% service-connected disability rating, or a veteran with a 20% disability rating or greater, you should first determine any benefits to which you are entitled under Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E, Chapter 31). You can learn more about VR&E also from the VA website.

NOTE: If you need any help making your choice, VA Vocational and Employment counseling help is available to all veterans toll free at 1-800-827-1000. You also can discuss your options with a VA educa-

tion benefits specialist by calling toll-free 1-888-GI-BILL-1 (1-888-442-4551) or TDD at (800) 829-4833.

"Right Now Web" access is also another feature that is available on the VA website. This will allow you email/ask VA Educational Representatives specific questions regarding the Post 9/11 GI Bill, certificates of eligibility, VA payments or benefits. An additional feature of the web site also provides you with several hundred answers to already frequently asked questions.

Access to this website at https://www.gibill2.va.gov/vba/vba.cfg/php.exe/ender/std_alp.php and Ask a Question using the VA's email system by clicking on the second tab labeled "Ask a Question".

State Directors' Monthly Conference Call with VA Intergovernmental Affairs

By Tom Applegate

Each month, beginning December 2009, (and thanks to Jerry Griffis for attending that one for me) VA has a conference call which State Directors can access. Different subjects are covered each month and is followed by a Q&A session. To save time, only the national State Directors (NASDVA) president and the president of the National Association of County Veterans' Service Officers (NACVSO) are able to ask questions.

The January 6, 2010 conference call consisted of talks by Jan Kemp with the VA Suicide Prevention Hotline and Pete Dougherty with the VA Homeless Women Veterans Program.

Jan Kemp:

Suicide prevention hotline developed about 3 years ago. Mostly for those of higher risk – those with PTSD, homeless, etc. Needed to improve access to care and easier to get services. Each major VA facility and the larger CBOCs have at least 1 suicide prevention coordinator. Veterans can call 1-800-273-TALK for help. 1-800-SUICIDE also dumps into it. Press 1

(Continued on Page 6)

and is automatically routed to New York which is manned 24/7.

Over 224,000 calls taken. Over 7,000 “rescues”, people who were actually on the bridge ready to jump, or had a gun to their head, ready to pull the trigger, etc. New – Veterans Tech web site opened July, 2009 – over 3,000 chats into the service. Have been able to transfer 5,000 to the suicide hotline. Enhanced Care Package – if someone is identified as high risk they get a series of enhancements in their care – ways to keep them safe – work with their families, group therapy, etc. Go to www.suicidepreventionlifeline.com and click the Veteran link. Put zip code in resource locator it will tell you where the closest suicide prevention coordinator is located.

Q&A - Rebecca Lee, president of the National Association of County Veterans’ Service Officers:

VA needed to start sooner than 3 years ago. VA needs to reach out to smaller and rural communities and to women veterans with their problems which have resulted in suicide for others. Get the OEF/OIF counselors out into these communities.

Pete Dougherty – Homeless Women Veterans:

Showing up much more in younger age ranges than in older age ranges. Health issues: substance abuse, mental and physical health treatment, sexual trauma, non-combat-related PTSD. VA has targeted program which exclusively serves women. Programs for women and men in the same facility causes problems. 5% of women veterans who come through housing treatment center facilities are homeless. Many have children. Funds have been reserved by VA for transitional housing for homeless women veterans.

Q&A - Rebecca Lee – what is VA doing for the rural counties for homeless veterans? There are women living in their cars, afraid to make it known they are homeless for fear of losing their children.

Pete – housing funds targeted for rural areas and increased funding for contract care for rural areas.

The next conference call is February 3rd. As soon as we know the topics I will advise the CVSOs who can send us their questions which we will send to the president of the National Association of State Directors’ of Veterans’ Affairs (NASDVA).

The Indiana Operation Enduring Freedom/ Operation Iraqi Freedom Memorial Wall

**Indiana has sustained the following
casualties since the last Update**



U.S. Army Sergeant Dale Russell Griffin, 29, Terre Haute, Indiana

Died Oct. 27, 2009 in Arghandab Valley, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when enemy forces attacked his vehicle with an improvised explosive device.

He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Wash.



U.S. Army Private First Class Jaiciae L. Pauley, 29, Austell, GA. Family resides in Muncie, IN.

Died December 11, 2009 in Kirkuk, Iraq, as a result of a non-combat related incident.

He joined the Army in the summer of 2008 after his father and step-mother moved to Muncie, Indiana.



U.S. Army Specialist Brian R. Bowman, 24, Crawfordsville, Indiana.

Died January 3, 2010 in Ashoq, Afghanistan, from wounds suffered when insurgents attacked their unit with multiple improvised explosives devices and small arms fire.

A graduate of Southmont High School, where he was a member of the marching band, in 2004. He was a medic assigned to the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, Colo.



Director's Comments

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all the CVSOs and their families as well as to all other readers of this Update.

Dates the CVSOs may want to put on their 2010 calendars include:

7 June 2010 – Jon Brinkley Memorial Golf Outing. Conducted every year prior to the IDVA Conference, this golf outing is named in honor of long-time State Service Officer Jon Brinkley who passed away in January of 2009.

8-9 June 2010 – IDVA Conference – Marriott East, Indianapolis. This conference will be the first using the new 2-day format and promises to be a fast-paced, informative conference. We will administer the test after lunch on Wednesday and CVSOs will be given a Certificate of Attendance and released. Tests will not be graded on the spot but will be graded later and the results sent to the CVSO along with a Certificate of Completion.

June-July time frame – Indiana Women Veterans' Conference. While the date of this third annual Conference for women has not yet been set, I can guarantee that Hoosier women veterans will find it well worth attending.

6-22 August 2010 – Indiana State Fair. The second year for the extended State Fair will present some new challenges to IDVA and the staff. CVSOs in the Marion County "donut" counties will be invited to help man the booth. This year our booth will be separate from the booth operated by the federal VA, which will also present some challenges.

29 October 2010 (tentative date) – Fall Conference – Location to be announced at a later date but will be at a State Park closer to the center of the State.



The Education Center at the Wall Indiana partners with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to help tell the story

For many, the Vietnam War is from the distant past. Some 40 percent of the 4 million people who visit The Wall today are too young to remember. To them the long list of names cut in the smooth black granite are faceless; they have no context, no connection.

By telling the stories behind every name, the Education Center will help visitors understand the courage, sacrifice and devotion of those who fell, those who returned, and those who waited. While learning truths about the Vietnam War, visitors will also discover how the Memorial shaped the ways Americans mourn, and the vital part The Wall played in helping to heal the bitter divisions that tore at the nation's heart and soul.

IDVA is encouraging County Veterans' Service Officers to assist in this worthwhile project. A list of casualties of the Vietnam War from each county have been posted online on each county's page on the Indiana Veterans' Service Officers' Association (INVSOA) web site at <http://invsoa.homestead.com>. We are asking the CVSOs to contact members of each family and ask them to provide a picture of the casualty.

Details of how to send or upload the photo are outlined on the web site at www.buildthecenter.org.

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